and processes which provide affordable biotechnology solutions to the growing food insecurity and health problems.

R and D in agriculture biotechnology is being supported to develop improved crop varieties resistant to abiotic and biotic stress, specially drought. Salt resistant transgenic rice has been developed and is currently under field trial. Biofortification of important staple crops such as rice, wheat and maize, for enhancing micronutrients such as iron and zinc has been initiated. India also participated in the International Rice Genome Programme with ten other countries. Full sequence of rice genome has been completed. It is expected that the decoded rice genome will help in the discovery of gene and DNA markers for development of improved varieties.

In the health sector, research is continuing for developing low cost affordable solutions for public health. A number of vaccines and diagnostics have been developed which are under different stages of trial. Diagnostics for HIV, Japanese Encephalitis have been transferred to industry. Rota virus vaccine is in the advanced stages of trial alongwith the industry. Programmes have also been supported for developing identified drug targets for treatment of communicable/non-communicable diseases.

Interaction of foreign scientists with CSIR

1453. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Harvard and MIT scientists had recently interacted with the scientists of CSIR at a meet co-organized by the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how many scientists from CSIR have been able to translate their research work into successful commercial venture along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Indo-US Science and Technology Forum organized a seminar on "Technopreneurship in Academia" during 23-24

January 2006 in which a number of CSIR scientists participated and interacted with key note speakers and venture capitalists from Harvard and MIT.

(c) (1) Dr. P. Shantan Rao, Scientist of Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) has been granted Extraordinary Leave on foreign service terms for three years from 01.6.2005 to 31.5.2008 to enable him to become scientist entrepreneur while being associated with M/s BASR Fine Chemicals Pvt. Ltd, Jeedimetla, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh as shareholder for licensing of know-how for 2,4-dichlorofluorobenzene (IICT/ CSIR process).

(2) Shri S. Koteswara Rao, Ex-Scientist of IICT has taken the IICT/ CSIR process on chlorpyriphos (pesticide) to start a new manufacturing facility under M/s Bhagiradha Chemicals & Industries Ltd., at Cheruvukommupalem, Andhra Pradesh. The company achieved a turnover of Rs. 72.22 Crores and with a profit of Rs. 10.11 Crores during the financial year 2004-05.

Increase in reservation for SCs

1454. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to raise reservation for Scheduled Castes from the present 15 per cent to 16.23 per cent following increase in their population; and

(b) if so, by when that is likely to be given effect to and the effect thereof on 50 per cent overall ceiling set by the Supreme Court and 27 per cent reservation proposed for OBCs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Representations have been received for providing reservation for Scheduled Castes in proportion to their population percentage. In accordance with the 2001 Census, the population of Scheduled Castes is 16.23% of the total population.